



WASHINGTON STATE Board of Health

ALWAYS WORKING FOR A SAFER AND HEALTHIER WASHINGTON

DATE: January 9, 2013

TO: Washington State Board of Health Members

FROM: Ned Therien, SBOH Staff

SUBJECT: BRIEFING – SBOH POWERS AND DUTIES

Background and Summary:

The State Board of Health was established under Section 1, Article XX of the Washington State Constitution. It is the only board established by our state's constitution. The section states: "There shall be established by law a state board of health and a bureau of vital statistics in connection therewith, with such powers as the legislature may direct."

The powers and duties of the Board are stated in a large number of statutes. Chapter 43.20 of the Revised Code of Washington (RCW), titled "State Board of Health," provides much of the general and specific authority of the Board. Section 030 spells out the Board's composition, executive director and administrative staffing, as well as technical staff support from the Department of Health. Section 050 states the Board's responsibility to serve as a forum for the development of public health policy, its general rule-making authorities, and the responsibility of all state and local government employees to enforce rules of the Board. Although these two sections provide much of the framework for the Board's organization and duties, many additional sections in this chapter and other chapters provide additional powers and duties for the Board. Many describe specific rule-making authority. Others describe cooperative relationships among the Board and the Department of Health, the Governor's Interagency Council on Health Disparities, and other state agencies and local health jurisdictions.

A dozen years ago, Board staff developed a table listing the statutes directing its activities. It is interesting that many changes have occurred in those laws since then. An updated compilation is provided under Tab 08 in members' packets. This compilation is organized into major and sub topics.

Recommended Board Action:

None.